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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2016  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [KCRM](#) [KISL](#) [EAID](#) [ASEC](#) [BG](#)  
SUBJECT: IMPROVING BANGLADESHI COUNTER TERRORISM  
CAPABILITIES

REF: A. MILLER/ENGELKEN EMAIL MAY 18 2006  
[1](#)B. IIR 6 925 0070 06

Classified By: AMB. PATRICIA BUTENIS, Reasons: Para 1.4 (D)

[1](#)1. (C) ACTION REQUEST: See Paragraphs 14 and 22.

2, (S) Summary: After discussion of current mission Counter Terrorism efforts, embassy believes that enhancement to current programs is justified and should be explored. Embassy believes that next steps include steps towards initiation of a Rewards for Justice Program, and a joint inter-agency team composed of elements from State, Justice, Defense should come to Bangladesh to pinpoint Bangladeshi law enforcement organization, training and resource requirements. Post requests response. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (S) Embassy convened a Counter Terrorism Sub-Group (CTSG) composed of broad elements of the embassy, which included representatives from Treasury, Defense, and sections within State such as Executive, RSO, Political and Economic, and RAO to assess mission's current programs and efforts and ways to improve them. The CTSG reviewed what activities and programs embassy is doing now, what others are doing, extent of coordination with other international missions, effectiveness of what others are doing, what BDG wants in terms of assistance and materiel, assessment of what BDG can absorb, and appropriate ministries within BDG to coordinate such efforts. Many of these current efforts are in the Mission Performance Plan (MPP). Staff point of contact is Robert Wong (Classified EMAIL) [wongre@state.sgov.gov](mailto:wongre@state.sgov.gov) (Unclassified EMAIL) [wongre@state.gov](mailto:wongre@state.gov), PHONE is 880 2 885 5500 X2306.

ANTI-TERRORISM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
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[1](#)4. (S) Regional Security Officer (RSO) described the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) programs which included training police on terrorist crime scene investigation, fraudulent document investigations, critical incident management, explosive incident management, crises response, VIP protection, post blast investigation and investigation and interrogation techniques. Some of the courses have already been conducted and others are anticipated. He expressed disappointment that a SD/ATA offered six-month TDY officer to establish a CT unit in the Detective Branch of the police has never been filled. He opined that this is still needed.

[1](#)5. (S) The RSO explained that ATA has invested a significant amount of training in the Bangladesh police force in 2006. Many of these courses came with equipment grants that enabled

the police to "stand up" mission capable bomb disposal units, post blast investigations and a counter-assault force. The equipment grants were made possible through the mobile anti-terrorism training (MATT) courses. The RSO's concern now is sustaining the training that has already been given to the police. The RSO suggested additional training to improve the capabilities and make sure the already considerable investment by the U.S. to BDG is not wasted. Suggested training included additional MATT courses such as advanced Explosives Incident Countermeasures, Post Blast Investigation, Crisis Response Team to increase the capacity of the students that recent attended training. Likewise, offering more of the basic versions of these courses to further build the capabilities of the police. The weapon of choice in Bangladesh is an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and increasing the capabilities of the police to respond to emergencies involving IEDs is vital. The RSO further explained that the police have no capable dog handling units to search for explosives and establishing a unit would significantly increase the ability of the police to search for IEDs. In addition, the BDG has no capability to respond to any Chemical/Biological emergencies and this basic need has been identified to several members of the CTSG. The RSO felt the instructor development courses could help ameliorate some of the problems caused by transferring personnel out of the specialized units and bridge the gap to establish continuity in training for the police.

#### PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION SECURE COMPARISON EVALUATION SYSTEM

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¶6. (S) RSO and RAO described the Personal Identification Secure Comparison Evaluation System (PISCES) computer-based border entry control system, which would permit US and Bangladesh security personnel to identify and intercept

malafide travelers on real time basis. While Home Minister Babar agreed in an MOU to accept and install PISCES, RSO explained that there is only funding to offer BDG a basic version of PISCES and is not the customized version that BDG wants. As a result, BDG's prefers to retain its own computer system, FORTRAC.

#### MILITARY PROGRAMS

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¶7. (S) DAO said that the designated BDG Counter-Terrorism force is the first Paratroop Commando Regiment (Ref B). However, while the 1st Paras continue to train, a newer para-military police unit, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) appears to supplant the 1st Paras as the BDG preferred CT force. In BDG's efforts to find and arrest the terrorists who conducted a coordinated series of nation-wide bombings in August 17, 2006, the RAB was the unit of choice to find and capture the terrorists. DAO said that the 1st Paras are frustrated that they do not play a larger role given their designated status, and that they do not get the equipment they see the RAB is receiving. DAO said that training directed to the 1st Paras, if offered, should be continued as all military units rotate into or augment the para-military BDR forces. Others noted the political support drives the current support for funding the RAB, which is subject to change.

¶8. (S) Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) explained his office's programs which primarily focused on enhancing BDG maritime border security by supporting efforts to expand the Coast Guard, enhance port security and provide training in basic Coast Guard skills such as boarding of ships. He said that while State S/CT ranks BDG as Tier I nation, meaning it has the highest access to program aid, State IMET/FMF ranks BDG as a Tier II nation, giving it lower priority. ODC noted that USAID may control the Tiers in the future, and that IMET/FMF has flexibility to move funding to support the training of police.

¶9. (S) Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) stated that the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) denied

permission for export of software he believed necessary to improve the command and control of the para-military Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

#### UNDERMINING FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF TERRORISM

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¶10. (S) The Resident Legal Advisor (RLA) is charged with managing several programs supported by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Treasury (DOT). She described training programs to increase the BDG capacity to investigate and prosecute financial crimes, the progress on developing a Financial Investigations Unit (FIU), and developing a BDG legal framework consistent with international standards.

¶11. (S) The RLA described her international partner working group composed of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Australia and the United Kingdom (UK). She wants to add the BDG Non-Governmental Organization Bureau (NGOB) which regulates international foreign assistance organizations. She said that BDG has a shortage of quality prosecutors, and may seek to ask private law firms to loan attorneys to prosecute financial crimes. Other issues included: initiating training of BDG Criminal Investigation Division (CID), police and other specialized units, using funding or trainers from the International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), or from State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)

¶12. (S) The Political Section described U.S. assistance to provide technical assistance to bring the BDG passport compliant with International Civil Aviation Standards (ICAO). Also known as the Passport Modernization Project, the project conducted a study which documented the BDG's passport and issuing office's security deficiencies. Poloff provided copies of the study to all participants.

#### REWARDS FOR JUSTICE PROGRAM

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¶13. (S) Rewards for Justice RFJ - The CTSG acknowledged the benefits of having the RFJ program in Bangladesh, that public affairs needs to be involved, that the program should include information on terrorist financing, and would involved paid

radio and TV ads. The disadvantages noted: the program is time intensive, this is a poison pen society so expect a number of false leads, and most leads will be Bangla. The embassy also weighed possible BDG responses to the RFJ program in deciding whether the program would be suitable.

¶14. (S) The embassy plans to implement a Rewards for Justice Program in Bangladesh, and seeks advice on implementation. Point of Contact (POC) for this is RSO Nick Sabruno (Classified EMAIL) sabrunoda@state.sgov.gov (Unclassified EMAIL) sabrunoda@state.gov, PHONE is 880 2 885 5500 X2228

#### OTHER FOREIGN MISSION'S PROGRAMS

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¶15. (C) Poloff briefed CTSG on other foreign mission programs. Most programs focused on police training. The UK, Canadians and Australians are assessing police and security forces, seeking to coordinate with the U.S. and ensure that and will be preparing to offer programs. The UK is planning some level of training to the RAB not yet specified. This is over and above the UK's planned support of a 30 million Euro UNDP program to upgrade the BDG police. Embassy participated in the local G8 Counter Terrorism Action Group (CTAG) and coordinates with the local missions of Canada, UK, and Australia (the Quartet) on CT. A matrix of known Quartet local programs was distributed.

¶16. (SBU) A substantial investment by the Japanese, started in April 2004, provided police vehicles, constructed police stations around the country, instituted a Japanese style community policing program, provided computer

inter-connectiveness between police stations, and provided forensics equipment. They plan to provide technical support and instruction on the use of the forensics equipment. Poloff plans to meet with other Missions undertaking police development efforts including UNDP and Germany.

#### DISCUSSION: THOUGHTS AND IDEAS

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¶17. (S) Embassy discussed the effectiveness of BDG's current CT efforts. RSO believed the structure of the police, with no specialized units, undermined its ability to combat terrorists. For example, with no career paths there is no incentive for officers to undertake training and remain in these essential specialized CT oriented units. RSO further explained that most officers serve a two to three year tour in a specialized unit and the transfer to a job completely unrelated. As a result, this is little institutional knowledge of critical needs such as bomb disposal or forensic investigations. DAO and ODC said that current U.S. efforts are successful as many BDG generals have received U.S. training at some part of their career, but some of the training is too technical for the BDG to absorb or to use. The training can be tweaked but some BDG restructuring is required, e.g. their procurement and acquisitions needs improvement. DAO TDY questioned if the U.S. is spending funds on the right forces. Noting the public support of the RAB, the DAO TDY questioned continued support for training military units such as 1st Paras.

¶18. (S) Embassy discussion focused on the RAB, launched in 2004 as an elite crime-fighting force. Participants noted that RAB's extra-judicial killings this month were at an all time high with 26 people killing in "cross-fires." Embassy reviewed the constraints of the Leahy amendment, and offered that to enhance the capabilities of the RAB as force there are benefits to interim steps to improve their human rights performance. Steps discussed include:

- find out their current level of human rights training;
- improve that level by providing human rights training to some internationally recognized standard;
- improve personal accountability by systematic tracking of police and RAB trained by U.S. and other foreign missions;
- improve the transparency of the RAB's after cross fire process, after each "cross-fire" is reviewed by a magistrate and then officially declared a legal, defensible police action; and
- ascertain the ability of the RAB to absorb human rights training,

¶19. (C) Embassy discussed requests their interlocutors requested from the U.S. The items included: forensic lab equipment, helicopters, centralized information data base technology, electronic eavesdropping equipment, and

chemical-biological counter-measures response equipment.

¶20. (S) Embassy noted media reports citing Home Minister's Babar's announcement to create a new Counter Terrorism unit. As more is known about Babar's ideas, post will report septel.

#### THE WAY AHEAD

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¶21. (SBU) Embassy plans to convene a third meeting to plan a timeline, the way ahead, and priorities for action. Issues to be addressed will be developing a needs-based approach for improving the capabilities of Bangladesh's CT forces. This would include understanding their current organization, level of training and capabilities, equipment, then developing suitable standards for improvement of their capabilities, accountability, and their respect for human rights.

¶22. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Embassy requests a Joint Inter-Agency Coordination Group Counter Terrorism (JIACG-CT) assessment as a necessary first step.

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